



FROM THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN JIM COSTA

*Representing California's 20th District
Fresno County · Kern County · Kings County*

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CONGRESSMAN COSTA VOTES TO PROTECT AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Jim Costa released the following statement regarding his vote on H.R. 3045, "Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act" (CAFTA):

"I fully support global commerce. As a third-generation family farmer, I truly understand the benefit of opening the world to the abundance of U.S. products.

"Of the producers in the Central Valley, some will win and some will lose with CAFTA. In Washington, I vote on behalf of the Central Valley's best interest to ensure a free and fair trade policy. Unfortunately, regardless of the diligent work and excellent intentions of our trade negotiators, the trade agreements we have entered into are not serving America well, especially not American agriculture. The increasing trade deficit over the last ten years serves as proof.

"The evidence of our trade failures is undeniable. Over the last dozen years, the U.S. trade deficit has grown exponentially from a deficit of \$38 billion in 1992 to \$668 billion last year. This is an incredible increase of more than \$630 billion in twelve years, or more than 1700 percent! This year, in spite of the Trade Promotion Authority enjoyed by the President and the plethora of agreements brought before Congress, America's trade deficit is the largest it has been in nearly fifty years.

"Last year, many of the ships traveling from Asia to the West Coast ports traveled back across the Pacific empty. This is a tragic illustration of a trade policy that is not working. Our current agreements give us little or no ability to leverage our strengths as a trading partner.

"Do we truly need another agreement when Japan, one of our most important trading partners, continues to refuse entry of American beef, which is one of our safest and highest quality food products?

"For the sake of the American agricultural economy, and other American industries, we must do better. We must seriously evaluate the way in which we conduct trade, beginning with the agreements we negotiate. We must look at what is working and, more importantly, what is not working.

“Ten years ago, I supported NAFTA. But, with the current state of our trade situation and the weakness and of our current agreements, I cannot find any sense in supporting another trade agreement that perpetuates this sort of ineffective policy.

“I am reminded of a familiar quote attributed to Albert Einstein that illustrates my hesitation about CAFTA. “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.” In light of our trade deficits, how can we approve another agreement and expect different, better results for the American farmer?

“In conclusion, my vote today against CAFTA is a vote of protest and a vote of dissatisfaction. My “no” vote today is a message on behalf of American agriculture, American businesses and American workers to the Administration and my colleagues in Congress, that we absolutely must develop a new trade strategy, a strategy that over time reverses our trade deficit.

“This new trade strategy must be straight with the American public. It must define who over the next 10, or 20, or 30 years will be the winners and losers. In order, for America to remain economically strong in the 21st Century, we must have a plan to address the transitions and shifts in our domestic economy.

“As participants in the 21st Century economy, which Thomas Friedman refers to as “the new flat earth,” American workers and business owners deserve to know what their chances are in the global economy. They need to know who among them will be the winners and losers.

“And, throughout that deliberation, American agriculture must have a seat at the table,” concluded Costa.

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